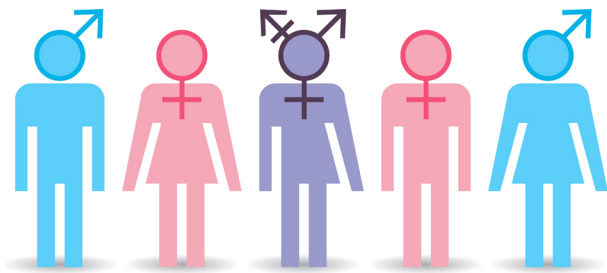


GENDER IDENTITY



INFORMATION AND ADVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

GENDER IDENTITY VERSUS SEX

People are labelled as a 'boy' or 'girl' based on their male or female appearance at birth. Our genitals, as well as our brains have different male and female traits.

The physical differences (genitals) define our sex, whereas gender identity, describes the inner sense of knowing where we fit in our social lives as men, women, or somewhere in-between, or outside, these labels.

Gender role and gender expression are terms that describe how we behave and express our gender identity in society.

WHERE SEX AND GENDER IDENTITY DON'T MATCH

For some people, sex (genitals), gender identity and gender role all match. When a baby is born, it is assumed that the gender identity matches their sex (genitals).

However, some people find that the way they look and the way they are expected to behave doesn't fit how they feel inside.

This is known as 'gender incongruence', and it can cause a feeling of discomfort that is described as 'gender dysphoria' (dysphoria means unhappiness or unease).

This is not a mental illness. It is increasingly understood to happen before birth when the brain is developing.

Just because you were assigned a certain sex at birth doesn't mean you need to live as that gender if it doesn't feel right.

THE WIDER TRANS* POPULATION

Every individual is unique within so each person will experience their dysphoria (or discomfort being labelled as a boy or a girl) to a different degree.

Labels don't really do justice to the wide variety of feelings and gender identities out there, but the terms 'trans', trans* and transgender are probably the most commonly used.

These terms include a broad spectrum of people. Some people do not identify comfortably as men or women and may be non-gender, where they don't feel as they relate to any gender. Others identify as non-binary or gender queer, which means that they feel that they are somewhere in between male and female.

Other descriptions that some people in the spectrum use to describe their gender identity include: pan-gender, poly-gender and neutrois. Gender neutral pronouns such as 'they', 'per', 'zie' and 'fey', can be used instead of 'he' or 'she'. Titles, such as 'Mx' or 'Pr' instead of 'Miss', 'Mrs' or 'Mr' can also be used.

Gender can be very fluid - some people may adjust their gender role, but not seek treatment and others may cross-dress.



WHAT IF MY PARENTS OR CARERS AREN'T ACCEPTING?

Having a child with a gender identity that parents or carers aren't familiar with can be difficult for parents or carers to understand. In some cases, parents or carers may just need more information about gender identity, which we may be able to help with.

Sadly, not all parents or carers will support their trans* children, so it's important to know that Galaxy are here to support you as much as we can.

Mermaids are a UK-based charity for trans* young people and their families and they can also provide support. If you are over 16 they may be able to offer legal advice and support for you.

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS LEGISLATION

'Gender reassignment' is a 'protected characteristic' under the Equality Act 2010. This means that it is unlawful to discriminate against, harass or victimise trans people from the moment they reveal that they are intending to undergo a process of reassignment, or 'a part of [that] process'.

The 'process of reassignment' does not need to be medical, so you are still protected if you haven't yet, or do not wish to medically transition. This protection also applies to those who are perceived to be trans, or who are associated with them, e.g. a partner, relative or carer.

The law requires employers and service providers (this includes schools and doctors) to respect trans people's new names, titles and pronouns; their trans history should not be revealed; access to toilet and changing facilities must be in accordance with their permanent gender expression.

REPORTING A HATE CRIME

A hate crime is any incident or crime which is motivated by someone's irrational hatred of the differences of others such as sexuality or gender identity. You can report hate crime and find more information on hate crimes at www.report-it.org.uk. You can also report hate crimes by calling the Police on 101.

Always call 999 if you are in immediate danger.

WHERE CAN I GET SUPPORT?

Galaxy hold a social and support group for LGBT+ people aged 13-18 in Stoke-on-Trent. The group is a drop-in and runs every Saturday from 12-4pm.

The team at Galaxy can offer advice and signposting to other related services. It's also a great opportunity to meet and socialise with other LGBT+ young people. Find out more about Galaxy at www.lgbtstoke.co.uk.

Mermaids are a UK-based charity for trans* young people and their families and they can also provide support.

If you are over 16 Mermaids may be able to offer legal advice and support for you. Their website has some really useful information for trans* young people and their families - visit www.mermaidsuk.org.uk

GET IN TOUCH WITH OUR TEAM

We're here to help if you need advice or someone to talk to.

✉ Email lgbt@mpft.nhs.uk

☎ Call 0300 123 0970

📘 Find us on Facebook at facebook.com/gaygalaxyouth

INFORMATION TAKEN FROM GRES AND MERMAIDS.
FIND MORE INFORMATION AT WWW.GRES.ORG.UK
AND WWW.MERMAIDSUK.ORG.UK

